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Unknown Hominids and New World Legends

BACIL F. KIRTLEY

WITHIN RECENT YEARS two mammalogists with long field experience have argued seriously that unknown hominids exist. Bernard Heuvelmans in *On the Track of Unknown Animals* (New York: 1959) cites reports attesting the presence of near-humans in Ceylon, Sumatra, the Himalayan region, Africa, and South America, and concludes that some of these accounts contain a residue of fact. Ivan Sanderson in his sensational, polemical book, *Abominable Snowmen: Legend Come to Life* (New York: 1961), states the opinion (p. 326, for example) that there are five distinct types of hominid whose existence has not been conceded by science. These elusive beings, he urges, evolved parallel to *homo sapiens* and retreated ages ago, not into the high alpine zones with their lunar ecology, but into the densely forested montane regions of Malaysia, Central Asia, Africa, North America, Central America, and South America, areas where they can subsist precariously and marginally and at the same time elude the bloody depredations of mankind.

Heuvelmans' and Sanderson's books, although they insist upon conclusions which are (to say the least) bizarre, bring together from the most diverse sources numerous legends upon a pervasive and protean traditional concept. This study will give additional examples from New World folklore of the belief in near-human or subhuman creatures and thus supplement the documentation of an important folkloristic theme. In addition, it will examine some of the motifs which persistently occur in man-beast legends and, by means of comparative materials, attempt to suggest the implications of these affinities.¹

¹ Much material from the North American Indians—who have numerous legends of diminutive, fairy-like beings and of humanoid monsters of all sorts—would be relevant to this study. However, most of this material, too abundant for consideration here, is located in predictable volumes and is easily accessible to anyone knowing how to use a motif-index. The examples given here come from sources a student might overlook and are intended specifically to augment those of Heuvelmans and Sanderson, as well as to furnish transparently folkloristic analogies to Heuvelmans' and Sanderson's materials. The following motifs cited by Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (6 vols.; Copenhagen and Bloomington, Indiana: 1955-1958), are relevant to the main theme of this study: F433.1. *Spirit of snow*; F436. *Spirit of cold*; F441.3. *Wild man as wood spirit*; F460. *Mountain spirits*; F521.1. *Man covered with hair like an animal*; F567 (Type 502) *Wild man*; F567.1. *Wild woman*. Edward Frederic Benson in his story, "The Horror Horn," has treated the concept in fiction.

ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES FROM NEW WORLD LEGENDRY

The British Columbian equivalent of the Yeti, or Abominable Snowman, is the *Sasquatch*, a creature sufficiently celebrated to share a news heading in the New York *Times* with Queen Elizabeth on August 30, 1959.² The *Sasquatch*, a demon which apparently originated in Indian folklore, became well known to Canadian whites during the nineteenth century.³ The following story, from gold-rush days, probably represents a distortion of the Indian concept which diffused into Alaska, although it could conceivably be an adaption of an European belief (the ubiquity of the "wild-man" motif will be illustrated below).

During the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898-1899, miners claimed to encounter a sinister glacial demon which bears a marked resemblance to the Abominable Snowman as depicted in the tabloids. The only information upon this phantasm seems to be that given by Captain W. R. Abercrombie, Second U.S. Infantry, who was ordered to Alaska to undertake specific tasks of exploration for the War Department. In April, 1899, the captain landed on the coast of Southern Alaska at Port Valdez, a short distance from Valdez Glacier, which was one of the routes which prospectors tried to utilize that winter as an entry into the Klondike. He found a destitute horde of would-be miners, defeated by scurvy and the subarctic winter, existing in flimsy, dirty, overcrowded hutments. In his description of the down-and-out prospectors, Captain Abercrombie mentions the "glacial demon" with an emphasis which leaves no doubt of the men's sincere belief in its reality.

I noticed in talking to these people that over seventy per cent of them were more or less mentally deranged. My attention was first directed to this fact by their reference to a "glacial demon." One big, rawboned Swede, in particular, described to me how this demon had strangled his son on the glacier, his story being that he had just started from Twelve-Mile Plant (a small collection of huts just across the Coast Range of Mountains from Valdez) with his son to go to the coast in company with some other prospectors. When halfway up the summit of the glacier, his son, who was ahead of him hauling a sled, while he was behind pushing, called to him, saying that the demon had attacked him and had his arms around his neck. The father ran to the son's assistance, but as he described it, his son being very strong, soon drove the demon away and they passed on their way up toward the summit of Valdez Glacier. The weather was very cold and the wind blowing very hard, so that it made traveling very difficult in passing over the ice between the huge crevasses through which it was necessary to pick their way to gain the summit. While in the thickest of these crevasses, the demon again appeared. He was said to be a small, heavy-built man and very active. He again sprang on the son's shoulders, this time with such a grasp that, although the father did all he could to release him, the demon finally strangled

² CVIII, No. 37, 108, p. 31: "Snowman Legend Heard by Queen."

³ Sanderson, pp. 22-45.

the son to death. The old man then put the son on the sled and brought him down to Twelve-Mile camp, where the other prospectors helped bury him.

During the recital of this tale the old man's eyes would blaze and he would go through all the actions to illustrate just how he fought off this imaginary demon. When I heard this story there were some ten or twelve other men in the cabin and at that time it would not have been safe to dispute the theory of the existence of this demon on the Valdez Glacier, as every man there firmly believed it to be a reality.

I was informed by Mr. Brown that this was a common form of mental derangement incident to those whom a fear of scurvy had driven out over the glacier, where so many had perished by freezing to death.⁴

Sanderson, after documenting the case for unknown hominids in British Columbia and Northern California, presents reports of near-humans from a number of places in Mexico: the Yaqui Indians believe in the existence of large, hairy men who live in an immense, unexplored canyon in the Sierra Madre Occidental (p. 153); the Chiapans give a place in their folklore to a mysterious being known variously as *Salvaje*, *Cax-vinic*, and *fatasma humano* (p. 157); and the inhabitants around Cubulco tell stories of a fur-covered, manlike creature larger than a human, whom they fear greatly (p. 159).

Similar legends exist in Oaxaca. The Zoque, a primitive mountain people in the southeastern part of Oaxaca, have stories of men who turned into demi-animals (*binquizacs*) in order to escape the conquistadores. The creatures, sons of the devil, are thought still to live nearby.⁵

Sanderson's material can also be supplemented from Central and South America. He quotes a Guatemaltecan tale of the *Sisimite*, a hairy, manlike creature believed to abduct women for mates (pp. 160-162). The *Sisimite* concept is apparently widespread in Guatemala, for the Chorti Indians have the following belief:

Sisimite is said to be both a giant and dwarf of horrible aspect, his body covered with long hair reaching to the ground. Although he walks forward, his feet are turned backward on the ankles, and he takes long strides. The Sisimite is of both sexes, each sex usually living by itself, although they are sometimes said to live as man and wife. The male of the apparition deals with women, and the female with men. They live in uninhabited hills and precipices and in dark secluded streams far from human habitations and are considered the guardians of rocky hills, and precipices, and secluded spots. They are also the guardians of wild animal life, since all wild animals belong to them, and they are said to attack single hunters on lonely trails.⁶

⁴ Capt. W. R. Abercrombie, "Copper River Exploring Expedition, 1898," in *A Compilation of Narratives and Explorations in Alaska*, U.S. 56th Cong., 1st sess., S. Doc. 1023 (Washington: 1900), p. 16.

⁵ Helen Augur, *Zapotec* (New York: 1954), p. 42. See also p. 37.

⁶ Charles Wisdom, *The Chorti Indians of Guatemala* (Chicago: 1940), p. 406.

An analogous belief is found along the Mosquito Coast of Central America:

On the unexplored mountain tops is said to be found a tailless anthropoid ape (*ulak*, *uluk*), reminding of the gorilla, orang-outang, or chimpanzee of the Old World. It is of erect position, about five feet in height, covered with black hair, and has the teeth turned backward. It is greatly feared, as it is supposed to carry off human beings of the opposite sex. This belief is also found among the other populations of the Mosquito Coast; the Rama and the Creoles call this ape *yoho* or *yuho*, while the Paya and Ladinos apply to it the Spanish-Mexican name *sisimite* or *chichimite*. Some Indians claim that this mysterious being has been seen several times during the last 20 years around the Guarunta Mountains, which extend northward of the lower Rio Coco.⁷

Also resembling the Sisimite in appearance and putative function is the Chorti *u tcur witsir* which, like the former, is a guardian of hills and utters a terrifying cry.⁸

According to Sanderson (pp. 164 ff.), stories of encounters with the "*Dwendis*" [sic]—little furry men between three and four and one-half feet tall who leave footprints with pointed heels and who carry leaves which look like sombreros over their heads—are frequently and sincerely told by the Caribs of British Honduras. The *Duende* (Spanish for "hobgoblin" or "fairy"), we might indicate, figures also in the folklore of Mexico, Guatemala, and South America.

In Oaxaca a class of daytime spirits called *duendes* (Zapotec, *biniñ*) is thought to be about two and a half feet tall. Folklore has it that "they may be encountered . . . on the road, in the fields, or in the mountains. They may affect a person's mind (*cambian la pensamiento de uno*), making him crazy."⁹

The Chorti also believe in the Duende, "a dwarf who is god of the hills and valleys, of domestic animals, especially cattle, and of property." Both male and female Duendes dress in green clothes and are thought to bestow wealth upon those who will relinquish, ten years after the bargain, a child to them.¹⁰

About 1925 Aimé F. Tschiffely, an intrepid English schoolteacher, journeyed, using two Argentine Creole horses, from Buenos Aires up the length

⁷ Eduard Conzemius, *Ethnographical Survey of the Miskito and Sunau Indians of Honduras and Nicaragua*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bull. 106 (Washington: 1932), p. 168.

⁸ Wisdom, pp. 408-409.

⁹ Elsie Clews Parsons, *Mitla, Town of Souls* (Chicago: 1936), p. 231.

¹⁰ Wisdom, p. 408. This is an interesting example of a borrowed folk tale motif (related examples are cited by Thompson under Motifs M210, B620.1; Type 552 but principally under S211; Type 756B. *Child sold [promised] to devil [ogre]*, and cross references under this entry) being absorbed into the theological tissue of serious religious belief.

of South America, Central America, and into the United States as far as Washington, D.C. He narrates the following experience, which occurred in the Columbian Andes. Victor, mentioned in the account, was an illiterate Ecuadorian peasant and was Tschiffely's *mozo*.

One morning when I brought the horses in from pasture, I noticed that one had his mane plaited. I tried to undo it, but found it tightly knotted. I asked the boy, Victor, if he knew anything about this or if he had done it, and he immediately told me "El Duende" had been with the horses during the night. I had never heard this name and asked for an explanation. In the meantime a half-caste Indian with whom I had spent the night had come up and assured me that the boy was right.

It appears that El Duende, according to these people, is a dwarf who lives in deep canyons and desolate valleys, where he can often be heard crying like a baby or, when he is in a boisterous mood, making noises rivalling thunder. Natives firmly believe that he is very fond of horseback riding; but, being so small, is unable to sit on the horse's back, so he sits on the animal's neck, making stirrups by plaiting the mane in such a way as to be able to put his feet in it.¹¹

Many primitive South American tribes believe in near-men, and Sander-son cites a number of descriptions gleaned from the continent by travelers and explorers: the *Shiru*, a small, hair-covered hominid, lives in the northern Andes (p. 166); the *Vasitri* (earliest account given by Humboldt), a cannibalistic, woman-abducting beast-human, inhabits the Columbian Andes (p. 171); an unnamed "apelike" beast, according to the Motilone Indians, roams the Sierra de Perijaa (p. 17); the *Mapinguary*, a vicious brute which leaves twenty-inch humanish footprints and sportively tears the tongues from living cattle, haunts the Matto Grosso of Brazil (pp. 174-175); and the *Didi* (*Dru-di-di* or *Didi-aguiri*), a "short, thick-set, and powerful wild man, whose body is covered with hair," wanders the forests of the Guianas (pp. 178-181).

If we infer correctly from a vague and excessively interpreted account, the Tupi-speaking Urubu Indians, living on the Gurube River in Brazil, also believe in a man-beast:

Curupir (literally, Rough Skin) is, the Indians say, the 'owner' of the jungle—its presiding spirit. His feet are turned round at the ankles so that his footprints point in the direction he's just come from—a way of deceiving those who try to escape him by running away in what they think is the opposite direction.¹²

¹¹ Aimé F. Tschiffely, *Tschiffely's Ride* (New York: 1933), p. 182.

¹² Francis Huxley, *Affable Savages* (New York: 1957), pp. 181-182.

THEMATIC PARALLELS OF UNKNOWN HOMINID LEGENDS

Many of the characteristics which legend attributes to the Abominable Snowman¹³ and other unknown hominids are frequently associated with types of traditionally conceived supernatural creatures whose fabulous nature is blatant. These parallels make unmistakably evident the folkloristic, mythical nature of the stories about near-humans.¹⁴

Perhaps the trait most widely ascribed to unknown hominids is that of having reversed feet, that is, their feet are said to point to the rear when the creatures walk forward. In addition to the New World examples from Guatemala and Brazil already cited, the Arawaks of South America attach this feature to their legendary men-beasts.¹⁵ In the Old World the notion that various species of wild men and supernatural creatures have reversed feet is provably ancient and widespread. Megasthenes, writing of the wonders of India in the fourth century B.C., mentions wild men with backward-pointing feet.¹⁶ In modern times Indian superstition represents ghosts as having their feet to the rear.¹⁷ The Sherpas of Nepal claim that the Yeti's, or Abominable Snowman's, feet are backwards,¹⁸ and this peculiarity is emphasized in beast-man legends throughout the Himalayan area,¹⁹ as in the Pamir region.²⁰ In Sumatran folklore both the *si bigau*, a type of gnome, and the *orang pendek*, a hairy dwarf hominid, are said to have feet pointing to the rear.²¹ In Africa,

¹³ Lists of Central Asian names designating the Snowman are given in the following works: René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of Tibetan Protective Deities* ('s-Gravenhage: 1956), p. 344, n. 1; Sanderson, pp. 459-462; A. Z. Rozenfeld, "O Nekotorykh Perezhitkakh Drevnik Verovanii u Pripamirshkikh Narodov," *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, No. 4 (1959), 55-66. The chief term used in the Pamirs seems to be *Gul-biyaban*, a word, according to Rozenfeld (pp. 57-58), stemming from the Arabic *gul* (English, ghou), a type of demon, and the Persian-Tadjik *biyaban*, desert waste. Central Asian terms have similar meanings, such as "wild man," "glacier man," or "mountain goblin."

¹⁴ This point has been anticipated by Rozenfeld, p. 66 and *passim*, basing his conclusions upon stories stemming from the Pamir region.

¹⁵ Heuvelmans, p. 328; C. Acuña, *Relation of the Great Rivers of the Amazon* (London: 1698), p. 158, cited by Conzemius, p. 168. Hence the concept in South America is at least 265 years old and likely to be indigenous.

¹⁶ Heuvelmans, p. 134; Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment and Demonology* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1952), p. 87.

¹⁷ G. Willoughby-Meade, *Chinese Ghouls and Goblins* (New York: ca. 1926), p. 229. The Indian legend is also cited by Stith Thompson under Motifs E422.1.6.1 and F401.9.

¹⁸ Heuvelmans, p. 134; James Ramsay Ullman, *Man of Everest, the Autobiography of Tenzing* (London: 1955), p. 95.

¹⁹ John Masters, "The Abominable Snowman," *Harpers*, Vol. CCXVIII, No. 1304 (Jan., 1959), 31. Masters quotes a Mr. Newman, who interviewed porters from the Howard-Bury Expedition. See also Sanderson, p. 8 (a story from Darjeeling); and Heuvelmans, p. 128.

²⁰ Rozenfeld, p. 56.

²¹ Heuvelmans, p. 113; 117.

Ivory Coast dwellers speak of dwarfs with backward feet,²² and similar legends seem to exist elsewhere on that continent.²³

Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index* further documents the motif's ubiquity and shows how the multiplicity of contexts into which it has been absorbed: a culture hero in Irish mythology can turn his knees and feet backwards (Motif A526.8); a giant in Irish mythology has his heels to the front (F531.1.3.2); certain dwarfs in Swiss folklore have their feet twisted to the rear (F451.2.2.1); winged forest-spirits are said by the Tinguian of the Philippines to possess backward-pointing fingers and toes (F441.4.4); and the Devil's knees are backwards (G303.4.5.6), according to a well-known European folk tale (Type 756B).

Another recurring motif in unknown-hominid legends is that sickness or death afflicts a person encountering a beast-man, whatever the being's local name may be. In Central America, as the quoted examples indicate, a person sighting a Duende or Sisimite is in for it, and will either fall ill, go mad, or die. The unpleasant consequences befalling a person who glimpses a Himalayan Yeti are fairly well publicized. The father of Tenzing, the Sherpa who made the final stage of the Mt. Everest climb with Sir Edmund Hillary, was ill for a year after he thought he saw a Yeti.²⁴ In the Himalayan region it is held to be equally unlucky to see a *Dev*.²⁵ The Gulbiyaban of the Pamirs, according to a belief of the Tadjiks, accosts strong men traveling in its territory and engages them in a fight. If the traveler wins, he experiences no ill results; if he loses, he falls sick for a long time.²⁶ In Sumatra looking at or touching an *orang pendek* is said to bring death.²⁷ On the Ivory Coast of Africa, some peoples fancy that anyone meeting or seeing a hairy dwarf, a mythical creature of the forests, will experience bad effects.²⁸ A seventeenth-century African belief held it tabu to look at a gorilla.²⁹

The types of supernatural or supernaturally tinged creatures to whom a meeting- or seeing-tabu attaches could be enumerated indefinitely, for the faith is almost universal that human beings encountering nonhuman pres-

²² *Ibid.*, p. 428.

²³ Sanderson, p. 189. The origin of the motif of reversed feet has been convincingly explained. Tracks which Sumatran locals said were those of the *orang pendek* were identified by a naturalist as those of the Malayan sun bear. Bear tracks, it appears, seem to an unpracticed observer to point in a reverse direction to the animal's line of progress (Heuvelmans, pp. 121-122). For the same reason, Huxley (pp. 181-182) finds the origin of the South American motif in tracks left by the anteater.

²⁴ Ullman, p. 93; mentioned also by Ralph Izzard, *The Abominable Snowman* (New York: 1955), pp. 19-20.

²⁵ Sanderson, p. 311.

²⁶ Rozenfeld, p. 57.

²⁷ Heuvelmans, p. 118.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

ences experience not only immediate fear and shock, but also a persistent and debilitating supernatural contagion.⁸⁰

Like many kinds of unknown hominids, the Hispanic-American *Duende* is often visualized as a hair-covered dwarf and a dweller of the uninhabited wilderness. His dress (sometimes in green clothes⁸¹) and behavior, however, ally him to the fairy of European tradition. The *Duende* of Tschiffley's story is like

... that very Mab

That plats the manes of horses in the night. . . .

(*Romeo and Juliet*, I, iii, 88-89)

The *Adzhina*, a Tadjik demonic being sharing many traits of the *Gul-biyaban*, similarly plaits and unplaits horses' manes by night.⁸²

Another motif associated with unknown hominids, a wild man serving as the guardian or king of wild animals, has far extending parallels. Both the Chorti's *Sisimite* and Urubu's *Curupir* are conceived to perform this role. In Asia and Europe men-beasts are similarly thought to be the patrons of wild life. In the Himalayan region, for instance:

The Lepchas worship this being [*Hlo mung*: "mountain goblin"] as the god of the hunt and owner of all mountain game. Tibetans and Lepchas describe the "snowman" as a huge dark-brown monkey with an egg-shaped head scantily covered with reddish hair.⁸³

The Chinese belief closely resembles that of the Himalayan peoples:

The wild beasts of the mountain have a king. He is a wild man, with long, thick locks, fiery red in colour, and his body is covered with hair. He is very strong: with a single blow of his huge fist he can break large rocks to pieces; he can also pull up the trees of the forest by their roots. . . .⁸⁴

⁸⁰ A key to the extensive literature which documents the above statement may be found in Thompson's *Motif-Index*, under entries C0-C99, C300-C399, and C900-C999, and under the cross-references appended to these numerous motifs.

⁸¹ Wisdom, p. 408.

⁸² Rozenfeld, p. 65. For further references to the theme of fairies plaiting horses' manes, see Thompson's *Motif-Index*, F366.2.1, and the author's "Folklore from Aroostook County, Maine, and Neighboring Canada," *Northeast Folklore*, Vol. I, No. 3 (Fall, 1958), 47, n. 15. Another motif found in an unknown-hominid legend occurs most typically in European stories of fairies: the Betsileo of Madagascar report that *Kalanoro*, "a land-dwarf," steals children and replaces them with his own (Heuvelmans, p. 513).

⁸³ de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, p. 344, n. 1.

⁸⁴ E. T. C. Werner, *Myths and Legends of China* (London: 1922), pp. 392-393. In Europe the uprooted tree became a symbol of the wild man: see Bernheimer, pp. 26; 94. Sanderson (pp. 146-147) gives a story from the Klamath, Oregon, region of a man-beast uprooting trees. Cf. Motif F610.1, *Wild man of superhuman strength*.

In medieval Europe, as well, the idea was widely held that a wild man rules the forest and its wild game.⁸⁶

The Central and South American legends describing hairy, manlike beings as abductors of women also find Old World parallels. In the pictorial art and fiction of medieval Europe, wild men are often depicted carrying off ladies,⁸⁷ presumably to share an amorous life in the greenwood, and the African Negro belief that gorillas abduct human females is too widely known to require documentation.

Several other motifs often appearing in man-beast legends, even though these motifs were not discovered in the New World, should be mentioned in order to suggest the wide range of contexts into which typical and recurrent wild-man themes have been absorbed. A story which was told to Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark and which he relates in a letter to the Indian newspaper *The Statesman* has attracted particular attention. In the Jalap-la Valley in Sikkim, the tale goes, a Snowman came regularly each night to drink out of a cistern. The villagers, becoming anxious, put out a bucket of fermented liquor. After the creature drank it and collapsed, he was found by the villagers and tied up. The next morning upon sobering up, however, the Snowman regained its strength, broke its bonds and escaped.⁸⁷ The same incident is said to have happened at the nearby Natu pass.⁸⁸ Also from Tibet comes a story that some Snowmen drank *chang* which persons from a small hamlet had left beside a hut. When they fell drunk, the locals, ignoring the principles of Buddhism, killed them all.⁸⁹ The abbot of the monastery at Thyangboche gave Sir John Hunt, who headed the successful British assault upon Everest, the story of a similar massacre of Yetis (though the abbot does not say the victims were made drunk).⁴⁰

The antiquity in Central Asia of the legend retold by Prince Peter is suggested by a passage written by Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century describing a country north of India which lies about twenty days' travel from Cathay:

In that land are lofty cliffs on which certain creatures dwell with a human form in every respect; they do not, however, bend their knees, but walk by leaping.

⁸⁶ See Bernheimer, pp. 99; 116; 160-161; *passim*; also, for iconographical examples, see plate 36 and plate 45. Thompson's motif number for the *Wild man as king of the animals* is B240.3; he gives, however a reference only to Werner.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 122 ff.

⁸⁷ The writer has not examined the full text of Prince Peter's letter, but three separate sources agree upon its contents: Izzard, p. 182; Heuvelmans, p. 137; and Sanderson, p. 261. A somewhat more detailed study of this tale, "Notes upon a Central Asian Legend," appears in *Folklore*, Spring issue, 1963.

⁸⁸ Heuvelmans, p. 137, n. 1, quotes René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Where the Gods are Mountains* (London: 1956), pp. 151-161.

⁸⁹ Heuvelmans, p. 138.

⁴⁰ John Hunt, *The Ascent of Everest* (London: 1953), pp. 78-79.

They are not over a cubit in height, have the whole body covered with hair, and do not speak. Hunters bring beer and make holes in the rocks like cups, and those animals come and drink the beer, fall asleep, and are so captured.⁴¹

In China, according to tradition, herb gatherers in the mountains customarily kill the hair-covered wild men found there after making them drunk. "Their numbers have in this way been thinned until at the present time only a few exist."⁴²

Europe has similar tales, deriving chiefly from the Italian and German parts of the Grisons, of wild men being made drunk and subsequently captured. Canny peasants, according to legend, leave wine or brandy in rock holes or in troughs. The wild man, after he drinks himself insensible, is tied up. He must buy his freedom by imparting knowledge which will bring his captor wealth.⁴³

In his novel of prehistory, *The Inheritors* (first published in 1955), William Golding incorporates an incident possibly suggested by the stories of wild men duped by alcohol. The protagonists of his work are smallish near-men (conceived primarily as Neanderthals, as indicated by the author's epigraph, but embodying also suggestions of *Oreopithecus*, the diminutive, manlike fossils dug from Tuscany coal mines) who are being casually but ultimately eradicated by a band of encroaching *homo sapiens*.⁴⁴ The human beings regard the furry, partially arboreal creatures as demons and place out for them a placatory offering of venison and mead. The scene in which two of the near-humans drink the mead and then disport themselves in pathetically clumsy buffoonery is, at least in spirit, straight from the folklore of the stupid and imitative ogre.

A Himalayan story describes a female Yeti who, when she flees after spying a human being, throws her extremely long breasts over her shoulders.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Robert Belle Burke, trans., *The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon* (2 vols.; London: 1928), I, 387. Bacon's account is mentioned also by Bernheimer, p. 93.

⁴² Werner, p. 393.

⁴³ Bernheimer, p. 25, finds the prototype of the recent European stories in the Greco-Roman tales of Silenus and Faunus, both of whom were captured while intoxicated by shepherds and released only after disclosing forbidden knowledge. Actually, the motif is widespread and, while undoubtedly many of its occurrences are genetically related, other examples probably came into being polygenetically.

Thompson cites the motif under K871. *Fatal intoxication* (and lists its appearance in Korea, Hawaii, Africa, and the West Indies), and G521. *Ogre made drunk and overcome* (Greece, Japan, and Africa). The theme is suggested by the Polyphemus episode in the *Odyssey*, and by the Japanese myth of the killing of the Eight-Forked-Serpent of Koshi, after being made drunk, by the Impetuous-Male-Deity. (Post Wheeler, *The Sacred Scriptures of the Japanese* [New York: 1952], p. xxix; Dr. Kiroko Ikeda pointed out this example of the theme.)

⁴⁴ However, according to Carleton S. Coon, "New Findings on the Origin of Races," *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. CCXXV, No. 1351 (Dec., 1962), 73, "... the Neanderthals were exaggeratedly Caucasoid, with long pointed faces and beaky noses."

⁴⁵ Heuvelmans, p. 128.

Tenzing's father claims that a female Yeti he met was about four feet tall and had low-hanging breasts.⁴⁶ The wild women of European fable—creatures like the huge and cannibalistic Fankke or Faengge—likewise are reported to sling their breasts over their shoulders as they run,⁴⁷ a singularity attributed also to fairies (F232.2), wood-nymphs (F441.2.1.2), mountain-wives (F460.1.2), giantesses (F531.1.5.1), and outsized ogresses (G123).

The Snowman, according to an Himalayan story, has metal fingernails,⁴⁸ a characteristic he shares with other fabulous species. In the Eastern Pamirs, the *Jestyrnak*, a kind of evil spirit whose role in folk tales often duplicates that of the Snowman, has claws and a beak which are sometimes gold, sometimes copper.⁴⁹ Central Asian and Siberian peoples visualize several demonic types as possessing bodies composed partially of metal, and the Eskimos reproduce closely the Himalayan motif in a story about beings with iron claws who eat a girl (G88.1).

In Oceania ogres having fingernails (sometimes specifically of metal) which they use as knives or spears appear in narratives coming from Ulithi (Eastern Carolines),⁵⁰ Guadalcanal (Solomons),⁵¹ the Banks Islands (Solomons),⁵² Rurutu (Austral Islands),⁵³ and New Zealand.⁵⁴

CONCLUSIONS

Two arguments which Sanderson uses for the existence of unknown hominids can be seriously challenged: he claims that eyewitness reports, particularly taken in the aggregate, are valid evidence of the creatures' existence; and he claims that serious reports of unknown-hominid encounters come only from montane areas where the creatures could plausibly have migrated or where they could have evolved from earlier mammalian types.

Have the multitude of witnesses who have described their meetings with men-beasts deliberately lied? Not necessarily. It would seem rather that their memories, translating experiences which perhaps were baffling and disturbing, short-circuited from the empirically defined mental world of normative reality into the realm of myth, an ideational sphere in which delusion and

⁴⁶ Ullman, p. 93.

⁴⁷ Bernheimer, p. 33.

⁴⁸ Sanderson, p. 321.

⁴⁹ Rozenfeld, p. 59.

⁵⁰ William A. Lessa, *Tales from Ulithi Atoll*, University of California Folklore Studies, No. 13 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: 1961), pp. 58-59.

⁵¹ Katharine Luomala, *The Menehune of Polynesia and Other Mythical Little People of Oceania*, Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 203 (Honolulu: 1951), p. 77.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁵³ The author, *A Motif-Index of Polynesian, Melanesian, and Micronesian Narratives*, Ph.D. diss., 2 vols., Indiana University, 1955 (Publication No. 14, 660, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan), Motif F552.1.3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

not deception rules. The following occurrences succinctly characterize the rules of evidence prevailing in this goblin universe.

N. A. Kislyakov cites the following incident: a young pupil in Vakhio [in Tadjikistan], when asked what animals he knew, answered: "the wolf, the bear, the fox, the hare, the Adzhina [a creature similar to the Gulbiyaban]." ⁶⁵

During the winter of 1960-1961, Khunjo, a Sherpa villager, made a trip to the United States and Europe as a kind of escort to an alleged Yeti scalp which was briefly loaned out by a monastery to visiting scientists for analysis. Khunjo saw the usual sights, including Buckingham Palace, where the "Queen's Guards wear large black Yeti scalps." ⁶⁶

The Yeti scalp, incidentally, turned out to be the "molded skin of serow." ⁶⁷ And the mysterious footprints which have baffled naturalists since the publication of Eric Shipton's photographs, the wintering scientists ascertained, are merely fox tracks which melt in an elongated fashion in the direction of the afternoon sun's rays. ⁶⁸

Sanderson's contention that the seriously believed stories of unknown manlike beings come only from regions where the creatures might have evolved or migrated is demonstrably unsound. Three instances from Melanesia, an area cut off from the Eurasian continent long before the appearance of mammals, support this assertion. The first example comes from the Fiji Islands:

These Kai Tholos (highlanders) have many legends and fairy tales which, unfortunately, no one who has really mastered the language can find time to collect. One is that the great *dakua* or *kaurie* pine-forests are haunted by tiny men called *Vele*, with high conical heads. They carry small hand-clubs, which they throw at all trespassers, who go mad in consequence; but (mark the coincidence with German fairy tales) if you have the wit to carry in your hand a fern-leaf, they are powerless, and fall at your feet, crying "Spare me." Once they fell in love with a pretty human girl who strayed into the forest. They were so charmed with her that they kept her there a year before she managed to escape. ⁶⁹

The writer then elaborates upon the earnestness of the Fijian's belief in the *Vele*. ⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Rozenfeld, p. 65.

⁶⁶ Barry C. Bishop, "Wintering in the High Himalayas," *National Geographic*, CXXII, No. 4 (Oct., 1962), 545.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 523.

⁶⁹ Constance F. Gordon-Cumming, *At Home in Fiji* (New York: 1882), p. 143. A story by a Mr. Ostman, who claims to have been captured by a Sasquatch in British Columbia, mentions the creatures' pointed heads (Sanderson, pp. 52 ff.). This detail is also standard in Yeti descriptions stemming from Central Asia.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Solomon Islanders fully accept traditional accounts that wild-men live in the forested mountains of their archipelago.

There is a legend, almost universal in the Solomons, of the existence of ape-men inhabiting the forest. These "men," as they are called by the natives, are supposed to live in the trees, to be intensely shy of humans, and very rarely appear. . . . They are said to be smaller in stature than a man, being four and a half or so feet in height, and walk with their hands touching the ground. It is of course obvious that anthropoid apes are being described by the natives, but what is most remarkable is that no white man has ever seen one, and, so far as zoölogical research goes, apes of any description do not inhabit the Solomons.⁶¹

One feels that Mr. Knibbs, the author of the above quotation, was himself half-convinced that ape-men lurked in the least accessible parts of the Solomons. Once he climbed to the peak of an extinct volcano upon the island of Kolombangara. Nearing the summit, he found "pig-trails" running through country so rugged that he could conceive of no animal which could use them—except, as he hesitantly suggests, perhaps the "ape-men" of native legend.⁶² Reports of this mysterious race have persisted until quite recently in the Solomon Islands.⁶³

Peoples in the New Hebrides, one gathers from the following passage, invest their legends with similar presences.

One is easily tempted to dream in the New Hebrides, with the help of a number of drinks. In the climate thus created, a number of legends and myths are afloat. Fantastic mines, yet never located with certainty; hairy pygmies living unclothed in the mountain. . . . How many beautiful stories told around a bottle of whiskey!⁶⁴

Even the most sincere and factually documented stories of Abominable Snowmen and other unknown hominids, we must conclude, are simply myths and emanate from persons who have made distorted interpretations of their own experiences, who have translated observed phenomena or evidence to accord with incidents which are adumbrated in folklore and, as are most traditional stories dealing with the extraordinary, structured to highlight effects of terror or to dramatize some ogrish singularity. Man-beast

⁶¹ Stanley G. C. Knibbs, *The Savage Solomons, As they Were and Are* (London: 1929), pp. 48-49. On Santa Anna and the other islands of the eastern Solomons, the people have a dance representing the attack and repulse of ape-men (*ibid.*, pp. 49-50).

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁶³ "Is There an Undiscovered Race in Guadalcanal?" *Pacific Islands Monthly*, Vol. XX, No. 7 (Feb., 1950), 96; and A. H. Wilson, "Guadalcanal's Undiscovered People Just Another Tall Tale," *Pacific Islands Monthly*, Vol. XX, No. 8 (March, 1950), 7. These articles are mentioned by Luomala, p. 76.

⁶⁴ James Tressol, *Strange Patterns in the South Seas* (New York: 1961), p. 51. Statements made by Felix Speiser, *Two Years with the Natives in the Western Pacific* (London: 1913), pp. 161; 277, indicate that the legend is indigenous.

legends are of high antiquity (one thinks of Enkidu in the *Gilgamesh* epic) and probably have multiple origins. We need not accept the romantic conjecture of Sir Harry Johnston, who, writing of Neanderthal man, postulates:

The dim racial remembrance of such gorilla-like monsters, with cunning brains, shambling gait, hairy bodies, strong teeth, and possibly cannibalistic tendencies, may be the germ of the ogre in folklore. . . .⁶⁵

Hairy, forest-dwelling dwarfs (Colin M. Turnbull in *The Forest People* [New York: 1961], p. 24, writes that some Pygmies he observed in the Ituri Forest are covered from head to foot with hair), hermit human-beings,⁶⁶ gorillas, apes, monkeys and bears, any or all, may have contributed to the legends' multiple origins and may have figured in the experiences of persons who continually renew the fantasy through autobiographical anecdotes. The basic element of the legend seems to be the wild-man or demon-of-the-wilderness concept—the Yeti is merely a Central Asian localization of this almost universal motif—and mythopoeic minds, stimulated by fancy and tradition, seem to have embellished this central and not entirely incredible theme with complementary details, most of which are egregiously fabulous and are characteristically associated with those quaintly absurd demonic beings long since relegated to the conceptual realm of the nursery.

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⁶⁵ Quoted by H. G. Wells in *The Outline of History* (1 vol. ed.; New York: 1921), p. 70.

⁶⁶ This theme is explored at length by Charles Allyn Williams, *Oriental Affinities of the Legend of the Hairy Anchorite*, University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol. X, No. 2 (1925).

TALE-TYPE AND MOTIF-INDEXING

Western Folklore provides its readers with index numbers for tale-types and folklore motifs as they occur in folk narrative materials appearing in these pages. Tale-types are classified according to *The Types of the Folktale: a Classification and Bibliography* ("Folklore Fellows Communications," No. 184, Helsinki, 1961), which was translated and enlarged by Stith Thompson from Antti Aarne's *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen*, "FFC," No. 3, Helsinki, 1910. Tale-type numbers are indicated as "Aarne Thompson, Type —." Motif numbers are taken from Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (rev. ed., 6 vols., Bloomington, Indiana, 1955-1958). They are noted in bold face type in the running line as they occur. Index numbers are supplied by Mrs. Joan Ruman Perkal, care of Folklore and Mythology Center, University of California, Los Angeles 24, *Western Folklore's* staff indexer who also prepares the journal's annual index.